



# Peoria Area Fact Sheet

The Central Illinois region of Peoria, Tazewell, and Woodford Counties is home to over 360,000 people. Peoria derives its name from the Native American inhabitants encountered by the first wave of French explorers. Located along the Illinois River, Peoria is the oldest community in Illinois with a population of approximately 115,000. Residents enjoy both the fast pace of a dynamic community and the slower tempo of old fashioned Sundays in the park and quiet backyard barbeques.

### **Regional Facts:**

- The largest airport in the region is the General A. Wayne Downing Peoria International Airport.
- Major highways that run through the region include Interstates 74, 474, and 155; Nearby interstate highways are I-55 and I-39

### **Peoria County**

- Population of 186,494 across 630 square miles
- The County Seat is Peoria with a population of approximately 115,000

### **Tazewell County**

- Population of 135,394 across 658 square miles
- The County Seat is Pekin with a population of approximately 34,000

### **Woodford County**

- Population of 38,664 across 542 square miles
- Eureka College, located in the County Seat of Eureka, is the alma mater of President Ronald Reagan

### **Quick Facts**

- Peoria is equal distance from Chicago and St. Louis
- Peoria is home to Caterpillar, Inc. world headquarters
- Downtown Peoria is undergoing a renovation from refurbished warehouses and lofts to restaurants and museums. The new Riverfront Museum opened in the fall of 2012 along with the new Caterpillar Visitors Center.
- Peoria is home to Bradley University, the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Peoria, Midstate College, Robert Morris University, Illinois Central College, and the USDA's National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research Lab

- Peoria was voted #3 in the nation in the “Top 25 Metros for High-Tech Employment Growth” from 2010-2011
- There are 7,985 business firms in Peoria
- Peoria boasts the nation’s longest-running Santa Claus Parade!
- Home to the Peoria Chiefs, Class-A affiliate of the St. Louis Cardinals
- The Illinois River carries in excess of 39 million tons of freight through Peoria County each year
- The Par-A-Dice Hotel & Casino, located in East Peoria, offers a Vegas-like atmosphere
- 78% of Tazewell County’s land area is farmland and agriculture
- Famous people from Peoria
  - General Wayne A. Downing
  - General John M. Shalikashvili
  - Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen
  - Betty Friedan (author)
  - Philip José Farmer (author)
  - Susan G. Komen and her sister Nancy Brinker (former US Ambassador)
  - Jim and Marian Jordan (Fibber McGee and Molly)
  - Richard Pryor (comedian)
  - David Ogden Stiers (actor)
  - Tami Lane (Academy Award winning makeup artist)
  - Dan Fogelberg (musician)
  - Jerry Hadley (opera tenor)
  - Elaine “Spanky” McFarlane (Spanky and Our Gang lead singer)
  - Joe Girardi (New York Yankees manager)
  - Jim Thome (MLB)
  - Shaun Livingston (NBA)
  - Carla McGehee (Basketball-Olympic gold-medalist )
  - Matt Savoie (Olympic figure skater)
  - Jack Brickhouse (sports announcer)
  - Rick Telander (Chicago Sun-Times columnist).

**Many more!**

### **Recreational Opportunities**

- The Illinois River offers boating, fishing, and other water sports
- Wildlife Prairie State Park just west of downtown Peoria is a 2000 acre zoological park with wolves, bison, cougar, elk, and other indigenous animals
- Jubilee College State Park, located in Peoria County, has 3500 acres that include horse, bike, and walking trails; a fishing pond; campgrounds; playgrounds; and picnic shelters
- The Peoria Park District’s 9000 recreational acres includes five public golf courses
- The Glen Oak Zoo houses a variety of animals and features Africa and Asia exhibits

